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Ethel Diedrichsen

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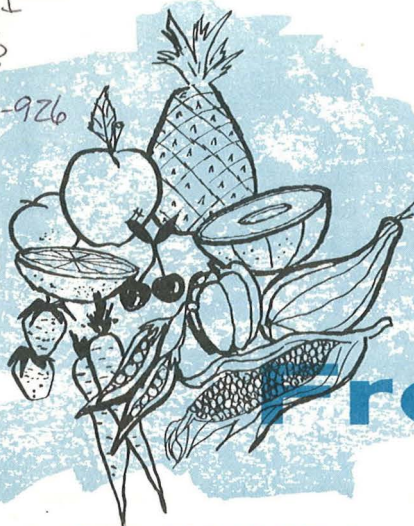
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Home Freezing OF FRUITS and VEGETABLES

by Ethel Diedrichsen
Extension Specialist, Food and Nutrition

Freezing is a simple, easy way to preserve foods. Properly frozen fruits and vegetables are much like fresh foods in color, flavor and nutritive value. They will keep a year without losing their high quality.

Some varieties of fruits and vegetables freeze better than others. If you are not sure how well a fruit or vegetable will freeze, test it first by freezing three or four packages. Then sample the food after freezing. This shows the effect of freezing only, not the effect of storage.

As a rule, all vegetables that need to be cooked freeze well. Vegetables such as cucumbers, lettuce, radishes and tomatoes lose their crispness when frozen and become limp. Most fruits can be frozen successfully.

EXTENSION SERVICE
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS
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Containers For Freezing

Good containers keep frozen foods from drying out and preserve food value, color, flavor and texture. A good quality wrapping material or container is moisture-vapor-resistant to prevent loss of liquid and flavor. It does not impart a flavor of its own and is clean and durable. Aluminum, glass, plastic or heavily waxed cardboard are suitable cartons for liquid packs. Bags and sheets of moisture-vapor-resistant cellophane, heavy aluminum foil, polyethylene or laminated papers are suitable for dry-packed vegetables and fruits.

Select a size that will hold only enough fruit or vegetable for one family meal. Seal the carton by pressing on or screwing on the lid. Most plastic bags can be sealed by twisting and folding back the top of the bag and securing with a string, rubber band or other sealing device.

Packing

Pack food tightly to cut down on the amount of air in the package. Allow ample headspace, because food expands as it freezes. Seal carefully.

Label packages plainly. Include name of food, date it was packed, and type of pack if food is packed in more than one form. Gummed labels, colored tape, crayons and stamps are made especially for labeling frozen food packages.

Freeze fruits and vegetables as soon as they are packed and store them at zero degrees.

Loading The Freezer

Put no more unfrozen food into a home freezer than will freeze within 24 hours. Usually this will be 2 or 3 pounds of food to each cubic foot of freezer capacity. Overloading slows down the rate of freezing so that foods may lose quality or spoil.

If power is interrupted, keep the freezer closed. Food in a loaded freezer usually will stay frozen for 2

days, even in summer. Both fruits and vegetables may be refrozen if they have not been completely thawed. The thawing and refreezing will usually result in lowered quality and loss of flavor.

Freezing Fruits

Most fruits can be frozen successfully. The quality of the frozen product will vary with the kind of fruit, the stage of maturity and the type of pack. Generally, the flavor of frozen fruit is good; the texture may be somewhat softer than that of fresh fruit.

Fully ripe, sound fruits of good flavor and attractive color make the most satisfactory frozen products. Not-yet-ripe fruits not only lack flavor but usually develop bitterness in freezing and thawing.

Preparation

All fruits need to be washed in cold water. Wash a small quantity at a time. Do not let the fruit stand in the water. Lift washed fruits out of the water and drain thoroughly. It is best to prepare enough fruit for only a few containers at one time.

Small fruits and berries can be frozen whole. Large fruits are usually halved or sliced. Most fruits and berries also can be frozen crushed or as puree for use as fruit toppings or fillings. Juice pressed from fruit or berries may be sweetened slightly before freezing.

Ways To Pack

Most fruits have a better texture and flavor if packed in sugar or sirup. Some may be packed without sweetening. Fruits packed in sirup are generally best for dessert use. Those packed in sugar or unsweetened are best for use in cooking.

Sugar Pack

Cut fruit into a bowl or shallow pan. Sprinkle the sugar over the fruit. To mix, use a large spoon or pancake turner. Mix gently until juice is drawn out and sugar is dissolved. Put fruit and juice into containers, leaving 1/2 inch headspace.

Sirup Pack

A 40 percent sirup is recommended for most fruits. For some mild flavored fruits, lighter sirups are desirable. Heavier sirups may be needed for very sour fruits. It takes 1/2 to 2/3 cup of sirup for each pint of fruit.

Type of Sirup	Sugar	Water
30 percent	2 cups	4 cups
40 percent	3 cups	4 cups
50 percent	4 cups	4 cups

To make the sirup, dissolve the sugar in hot water and chill before using. Place the prepared fruit in sturdy leak-proof containers and cover with sirup, leaving 1 inch headspace for expansion. To keep the fruit under the sirup, place a small piece of crumpled freezer paper on top and press the fruit down into sirup before closing the container.

Unsweetened Pack

Some fruits such as raspberries, cranberries, pineapple, rhubarb and strawberries freeze successfully without sugar. Crushed or sliced fruit may be packed in its own juice or covered with water containing ascorbic acid. Fill containers to within 1 inch of the top.

To Keep Fruit From Darkening

Ascorbic acid (vitamin C) may be added to prevent the darkening of light-colored fruits. Dissolve from 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoonful of crystalline ascorbic acid in a little cold water. In sirup pack, add the dissolved ascorbic acid to a quart of cold sirup shortly before using. Stir it in gently so you will not stir in air.

In the sugar pack, sprinkle the dissolved ascorbic acid over the fruit just before adding sugar. In unsweetened pack, sprinkle the dissolved ascorbic acid over the fruit and mix thoroughly just before packing. If fruit is packed in water, dissolve the ascorbic acid in the water.

There are special anti-darkening preparations on the market. If you use one of these, follow the manufacturer's directions.

HOW TO PREPARE FRUITS FOR FREEZING	
Fruit	Preparation
*Apples	Slice. Steam 1 1/2 to 2 minutes, or Mix 1/2 cup sugar with 1 quart apples.
Applesauce	Cook and cool. Sweeten to taste.
*Apricots	Peel, pit, and halve. Mix 1/2 cup sugar with 1 quart of fruit, or Cover with 40% sirup.
Berries	Pack dry without sugar or sirup, or Mix 3/4 cup sugar with 1 quart berries, or Cover with 40 or 50% sirup.
Cherries, sour	Mix 3/4 cup sugar with 1 quart of cherries.
*Cherries, sweet	Cover with 40% sirup.
*Grapefruit	Peel and section. Cover with 40% sirup.
Melons	Remove seeds and cut into slices, cubes or balls. Cover with 30% sirup.

*Ascorbic acid may be added to these fruits to prevent darkening.

HOW TO PREPARE FRUITS FOR FREEZING

Fruit	Preparation
*Peaches	Halve or slice. Mix $\frac{2}{3}$ cup sugar with 1 quart of fruit, or Cover with 40% sirup.
Pineapple	Slice, dice or cut into pieces. Pack without sugar, or Cover with 30% sirup.
Rhubarb	Cut into pieces and pack dry.
Strawberries	Slice or crush. Mix $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar with 1 quart of berries, or Pack whole without sugar or sirup.

Freezing Vegetables

Fresh, tender vegetables right from the garden are best for freezing. The fresher the vegetables when frozen, the more satisfactory will be your product.

Preparation

Wash vegetables thoroughly in cold water and sort according to size. Peel, trim and cut into pieces as desired. Heat to stop or slow down enzyme action. You should do this as soon as possible after the vegetables are picked.

Heating

For home freezing, the most satisfactory way to heat practically all vegetables is in boiling water. For each pound of prepared vegetables use at least 1 gallon of boiling water. Put vegetables in a wire basket or cheesecloth and lower into the boiling water. Put lid on kettle and start counting time immediately. Keep heat high for the time given for the vegetable you are freezing.

Cooling

After vegetables are heated, they should be cooled quickly and thoroughly to stop the cooking. Plunge the vegetables immediately into a large quantity of cold water. Change water frequently, or use cold running water or iced water. When the vegetable is cool, remove it from the water and drain.

Packing

Pack immediately into suitable container, leaving 1/2-inch headspace, except for vegetables like asparagus and broccoli that pack loosely and require no headspace. Seal the packages and store in freezer.

HOW TO PREPARE VEGETABLES FOR FREEZING

Vegetable	Preparation	Time for Scalding
Asparagus	Leave as spears or cut in 2-inch pieces	2 to 4 minutes
Beans, green or wax	Cut in pieces or slice lengthwise	3 minutes
Beets	Cook until tender then slice or dice	
Broccoli	Split flowerets to 1 1/2 inch thickness	3 minutes
Carrots	Scrape, slice, dice or leave small ones whole	2 to 5 minutes
Cauliflower	Cut into pieces about 1 inch across	3 minutes
Corn, whole kernel or cream style	Husk, silk, scald, then cut	4 minutes

HOW TO PREPARE VEGETABLES FOR FREEZING

Vegetable	Preparation	Time for Scalding
Corn on-the-cob	Husk, silk and sort according to size	7 to 11 minutes
Greens	Remove tough stems and cut as desired	2 to 3 minutes
Peas, green	Shell	1 1/2 minutes
Peppers, green	Slice or dice	none
Pumpkin and winter squash	Cook and mash	
Rutabagas and turnips	Cut in 1/2 inch cubes	2 minutes
Tomato juice	Cut in quarters; simmer. Press through sieve. Season	